

CV. *Singular Observations upon the Manchenille Apple.* By John Andrew Peyssonnel, M. D. F. R. S. *Translated from the French.*

Read Nov. 16, 1758.

THE cruel effects of the tree called Manchenille are known to all the world: its milk, which the savages make use of to poison their arrows, makes the wounds inflicted with them mortal. The rain, which washes the leaves and branches, causes blisters to rise like boiling oil; even the shade of the tree makes those who repose under it to swell; and its fruit is esteemed a deadly poison. I was informed, as a very extraordinary thing, that a breeding woman was so mad as to eat three of them, which did her very little harm; and this was looked upon as a miracle, and a proof of the surprising effects of the imagination and longings of women with child.

But here is a fact, which will scarce be credited by many persons, who have frequented these Islands: which I declare to be true.

One Vincent Banchi, of Turin in Piedmont, a strong robust man, and an old soldier, of about forty-five years of age, belonging to the horse, was a slave with the Turks eleven years, having been taken prisoner at the siege of Belgrade. He was overseer of my habitation towards the month of July of the year 1756. He was one day walking upon the sea side, and seeing a great number of apples upon the ground, was charmed with their beautiful colours, and
sweet

sweet smell, resembling that of the apple called d'apis: he took and eat of them, without knowing what they were; he found they had a subacid taste; and having eaten a couple of dozen of them, he fill'd his pockets, and came home, eating the rest as he came. The Negroes, that saw him eat this cruel fruit, told him it was mortal; upon which he ceased to eat them, and threw away the rest.

About four in the afternoon, *viz.* an hour after this repast, his belly swelled considerably, and he felt as it were a consuming fire in his bowels. He could not keep himself upright; and at night the swelling of his belly increased, with the burning sensation of his bowels. His lips were ulcerated with the milk of the fruit, and he was seized with cold sweats; but my principal Negro made him a decoction of the leaves of a *Ricinus* * in water, and made him drink plentifully of it, which brought on a vomiting, followed by a violent purging; both which continued for four hours, during which it was thought he would die. At length these symptoms grew less; and my Negroes made him walk, and stir about by degrees; and soon after they were stopped. Rice-gruel, which they gave him, put an end to all these disorders; and in four-and-twenty hours he had no more ailments nor pain; the swelling of his belly diminished in proportion to his evacuations upwards and downwards, and he has continued his functions without being any more sensible of the poison. We see by this, that the effects of the poison of the Manchinelle are different from those of the fish at Guadaloupe, which I mentioned.

Dec. 2. 1756.

* *Avellana purgatrix*; in French, *medicinier*.